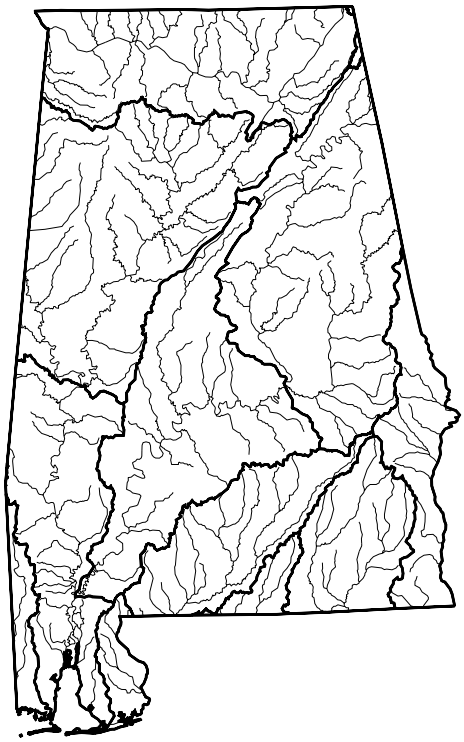
Alabama



Basin Boundaries
(USGS 6-Digit Hydrologic Unit)

For a copy of the Alabama 1998 305(b) report, contact:

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The report is also available on the Internet at: *http://www.adem.state.al.us/305bwebpg.html*

Surface Water Quality

Since enactment of the Clean Water Act of 1972, water quality has substantially improved near industrial and municipal facilities. However, pollution still prevents about 5% of the surveyed stream miles from fully supporting state-defined overall use. In addition, 19% of surveyed lake acres do not fully support aquatic life use and 84% of surveyed estuarine square miles do not fully support shellfishing use. Oxygen-depleting wastes and pathogens are the most common pollutants impacting rivers and coastal waters. The leading sources of river pollution include agriculture, municipal wastewater treatment plants, and urban runoff and storm sewers. In coastal waters, the leading sources of pollution are urban runoff and storm sewers, municipal point sources, and collection system failures.

Toxic priority organic chemicals impact the most lake acres, usually in the form of a fish consumption advisory. These pollutants may accumulate in fish tissue at a concentration that greatly exceeds the concentration in the surrounding water. Unknown sources and industrial dischargers are responsible for the greatest acreage of impaired lake waters.

Special state concerns include impacts from forest clearcutting and lack of streamside management zones. Animal waste runoff is another special concern that is being dealt with through an operation registration rule.

Alabama did not report on the condition of wetlands.

Ground Water Quality

The Geological Survey of Alabama monitoring well network indicates relatively good ground water quality. However, the number of ground water contamination incidents has increased significantly in the past few years due to better reporting under the Underground Storage Tank Program and increased public awareness of ground water issues. Alabama has established pesticide monitoring and a Wellhead Protection Program to identify nonpoint sources of ground water contamination and further protect public water supplies.

Programs to Restore Water Quality

Alabama's nonpoint source management program initiated a 5-year rotational watershed management schedule approach beginning in 1996. The approach involves assessing and identifying the causes and sources of nonpoint source impacts, prioritizing impacted watersheds, and providing resources to protect or improve water quality. The first river basin assessments were conducted in 1996-1997 in the Lower Cahaba and Black Warrior River basins. Other priorities of the nonpoint source program include demonstrating best management practices (BMPs); raising public awareness through education, training, and initiatives; and developing, prioritizing, and implementing nonpoint source total daily maximum loads.

Programs to Assess Water Quality

During the 1980s, Alabama implemented a multifaceted approach to surface water quality monitoring. This approach included a fixed-station monitoring network, reservoir monitoring, intensive waterbody-specific studies, fish tissue sampling, and compliance monitoring of point source discharges. In 1996, the state proposed ASSESS, a watershed-based strategy to integrate surface water quality monitoring with defined water quality objectives and associated environmental indicators. The objectives of ASSESS include improving monitoring coverage within river basins, improving spatial detail of water quality assessments, and increasing total stream miles monitored over the 5-year rotation period.

Summary of Use Support in Alabama

	Percent		
	Good (Fully Supporting)	Good (Threatened)	Impaired (For One or More Uses)
Rivers and Streams (Total Miles = 77,274)[b]			
Total Miles Assessed	95	-	5
2,987			

Individual Use Support in Alabama

Designated Use[a]	Percent				
	Good (Fully Supporting)	Good (Threatened)	Fair (Partially Supporting)	Poor (Not Supporting)	Not Attainable
Lakes (Total Acres = 490,472)					
Total Acres Assessed	67	15	17	2	0
463,115					
	78	5	9	7	0
463,111					
	77	19	4	<1	0
415,036					
Estuaries (Total Square Miles = 610)					
Total Square Miles Assessed	100	0	0	0	0
610					
	100	0	<1	0	0
610					
	16	0	84	0	0
497					
	100	0	0	<1	0
583					

– Not reported in a quantifiable format or unknown.

[a] A subset of Alabama's designated uses appear in this figure. Refer to the state's 305(b) report for a full description of the state's uses.

[b] Includes nonperennial streams that dry up and do not flow all year.

Note: Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.